

We are writing in regards to several proposed changes to radio broadcasting regulations.

Our first objection is the proposal requiring stations to get input from the communities they serve regarding their broadcast content. We believe the station managers should be allowed to decide what to broadcast as long as it is not indecent or does not advocate violence. If the general public does not want to listen to that message, they can contact the station and the businesses advertising on the station, to voice their disapproval. If it is truly something the area does not want the station/businesses will lose support and the station will be forced to change or go off the air. Forcing radio stations to take advice from an advisory board implies that the station needs to follow that advice or face possible legal action. Something many stations cannot afford monetarily.

Our second objection is to the proposed regulations requiring stations report the content/types of their programming along with who produced it and how it reflects the interests of the local residents. We believe there are no benefits to be gained from this requirement. On the down side, it would increase considerably the amount of paperwork a station has to generate and most likely require additional staffing. This information would also enable groups who oppose a certain message to target radio stations across the nation even though they may not have any members in that area. Resulting legal action, or threat thereof, could force the station to change its message, incur additional costs, or even go off the air. We do not see how any of this benefits the listeners/supporters of the station.

Our third objection is to the proposal that would require stations give equal air time to groups that request it. Some stations, such as Talk radio and Christian radio, promote certain values and beliefs. They are successful because they broadcast a message that many people want to hear and support. Forcing them to allow equal time to others who disagree with their positions goes against the freedom of speech, will weaken their support base, and may force them off the air. With today's technology there are many avenues for people to get their message out, including starting their own stations. If there is sufficient support for their position they will be successful. If not, then the public, who doesn't want to support them, should not be forced to listen to them, or support them, on successful stations. Public Broadcasting stations are also an avenue for listeners to get a variety of views.

Finally, we object to the proposed change in the renewal review process that would give the power of renewal/review to a politically appointed commissioner rather than civil servants. The renewal of a stations license could easily become dependent upon whether or not the message of the station is in line with the party in power. Allowing a political appointee to make decisions on what licenses will, or will not, be renewed, is in effect silencing the freedom of speech. It could conceivably result in a significant majority of stations running programming more favorable to one parties positions versus any of the others.

Thank you for your time in considering our concerns.

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